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SPAWAR Team Convenes a Third Year for MS Challenge Walk

BY: Andrea V. Houck

SAN DIEGO – For the third consecutive year, fellow employees rallied together to challenge themselves to a 50-mile journey for three days in an effort to shorten the road to the cure for multiple sclerosis (MS).



"The experience has helped make my outlook a positive one," said Kim Reidy, who was initially diagnosed with MS in 2003.

This year's seven-member "Frick, Frack and Friends" included Sarah Lamade, Jennifer Condon, Lisa Ramsey, Pamela Rose, Michael Meade, team captain Toy Walker, and Kimberly Reidy (formerly Mallis), who was initially diagnosed with MS in 2003.

"I'm so thankful for the exceptional generosity of my SPAWAR friends, both those who walked and those who donated to this cause. The experience has helped make my outlook a positive one," said Reidy, a SPAWAR contract specialist.

Frick, Frack and Friends were one of approximately 70 teams to participate in the MS Challenge Walk. Although each team was responsible for raising a minimum of \$2,500, Frick, Frack and Friends surpassed its goal and raised more than \$18,800 for the Southern California National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

The MS Challenge Walk was Sept. 16-18, and began in Carlsbad, Calif., and concluded in downtown San

Diego. The route varied from beautiful Southern California coastlines to scenic trails with MS Society supporters cheering on the walkers every step of the way. The Walk resulted in raising more than \$1.1 million in donations to put toward advancing MS research, provide educational forums and further MS advocacy efforts.

Donations raised from the MS Challenge Walk aid in advancing the research needed to find a cure for the disease. For example, the Food and Drug Administration has approved several treatments that may alter the underlying disease course of MS especially with early treatment, which is critical to minimize the number of attacks.



"Frick, Frack and Friends" raised more than \$18,800 for the 2005 Southern California Multiple Sclerosis Challenge 50 Mile-Walk.

According to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society website, MS is an inflammatory disease of the central nervous system that damages the myelin sheath, or insulating material, that surrounds the nerve fibers in the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves.

The myelin is lost in multiple areas, leaving plaques or scars called scleroses, which is where the name “multiple sclerosis” originated. This damage or loss of myelin can prevent nerve signals from being conducted, or can cause those signals to be conducted too slowly.

MS is generally diagnosed in individuals between the ages of 20 and 40. In the United States, it is estimated that approximately 350,000 people are living with MS, and nearly 200 cases are diagnosed every week.

More information regarding MS can be found at <http://www.nmss.org/>.

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